United Nations A/C.5/52/SR.4

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
6 November 1997
English
Original: Spanish

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 4th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 1 October 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Daes (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Greece)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 142: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Other matters

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

97-81922 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 142: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi (A/51/905, A/51/803 and A/52/380)

Proposals for management of peacekeeping assets (A/50/907, A/50/985, A/51/957 and A/52/407)

1. **Mr. Maddens** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, said that it was regrettable that the questions of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and the proposals for management of peacekeeping assets should have been scheduled for consideration at a time when the relevant documents had only just been distributed. It was not sufficient to listen to an oral report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) when final decisions were to be taken, and it was indeed understandable that the Advisory Committee should need further clarification from the Secretariat concerning the liquidation of peacekeeping operations.

2. Although the logistical support for such operations and the management of their assets were vital issues, the questions raised by ACABQ warranted a full reply by the Secretariat which the Committee itself would also have to take into account when it considered those matters. With respect to the financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and the management of peacekeeping assets, the ACABQ recommendations presented by its Chairman had the approval of the delegations on whose behalf he was speaking.

3. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that the objective of the Logistics Base at Brindisi was to prepare start-up kits for new or substantially expanding peacekeeping operations. In paragraph 14 of his report (A/49/936) the Secretary-General observed that the closure of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) had afforded an opportunity to redeploy existing assets to assemble a substantial portion of the equipment requirements for the planned start-up kits. It had been anticipated that, by using the surplus assets of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and other closed or scaled-down missions, the bulk of the resource stock of mission start-up kits would be constituted at "little" additional cost to the Organization. Furthermore, work was under way to open, inspect and inventory the containers holding surplus equipment and supplies sent to Brindisi from Somalia and Mozambique and, in case additional resources were required, the Secretariat was to finance such procurement from the budgets of existing and new missions.

4. In the Secretary-General's present report (A/51/905) two start-up kits had been proposed instead of the five originally planned, but the report did not elaborate on the present status of the kits. However, according to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/51/803), the review of start-up kits and of progress achieved in establishing them had disclosed that the project was still far from being workable. Since that observation was not in harmony with the Secretary-General's earlier report (A/49/936), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations might wish to elucidate that aspect in the informal consultations.

5. The Pakistan delegation would also like the Secretariat to explain whether the Office's recommendation that the Department should make the necessary budget proposals for the purchase of new items for the start-up kits which were not expected to be available from the reserve stock was in conformity with paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report (A/49/936). Furthermore, annex II of that report contained details of start-up kits which seemed rather ambitious; for example, 30 desk top computers with monitors and printers for 20 civilian staff and 80 military observers. It was questionable whether such provision was really required.

6. Another objective of the Logistics Base was to receive, inspect, repair as necessary, and stock surplus assets from the closure or downsizing of peacekeeping operations. Since the equipment supplied to the Base went first to the receiving and inspection area, in many cases the shipment of obsolete or unusable equipment had given rise to unnecessary expenditure on packing, handling, freight, customs clearance and storage at Brindisi. Accordingly, his delegation did not concur with the Office's recommendation for the technical evaluation of material at Brindisi; such evaluation should be completed by the sending mission before shipment, and the necessary modalities should be worked out to avoid additional costs owing to the shipment of unusable equipment. In that respect paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's report (A/51/905) merited special consideration.

7. The Pakistan delegation supported the Office's recommendation 5 and considered that incidents such as the ones described in paragraph 23 of its report, i.e., the damage

to spare parts worth more than 7 million dollars ought not to be repeated.

8. It also noted with concern the lack of proper inventory of the equipment received at Brindisi and agreed with the Office's recommendation 2 in that regard. The Secretariat had not yet stated whether a procedure had been devised for disposal of unusable and unserviceable equipment at the Logistics Base. According to the Office's report (A/51/803, para. 28), the Field Administration and Logistics Division had informed the Office that it was formulating such procedures for inclusion in the new Operational Support Manual scheduled to be completed in late 1996; since it was now late 1997, it would be interesting to ascertain whether the exercise had been accomplished.

9. The Pakistan delegation noted that, according to the Advisory Committee and the Office, no cost-benefit analysis of the Logistics Base had been carried out; an analysis should be carried out as a priority in order to facilitate approval and allocation of adequate resources commensurate with the functions assigned to the Base. In that context the Secretary-General might also explore the possibility of establishing bases in other neutral territories where there was a concentration of peacekeeping operations.

10. **Mr. Boynton** (United States of America) said that only one logistics base was needed, especially since peacekeeping operations were being downsized. The concept of the logistics base was indispensable and its objective should be to store and preserve useable assets, including start-up kits, and prepare them for new missions, as well as providing the necessary communications links for missions in operation. It was regrettable that a proper cost analysis had not been made and it was to be hoped that one would be made very soon.

11. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had thus concluded its general debate on the two questions.

Other matters

12. **The Chairman** invited the Deputy Director of the Facilities Management Division to make a statement in reply to the question asked on 8 September 1997, at the Committee's 72nd meeting during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, concerning the authority of the garage administration to impose fines in the United Nations garage.

13. **Mr. Nasereddin** (Deputy Director, Facilities Management Division) said that, while there was no document referring specifically to the authority of the garage administration to impose fines on delegations using the garage, there appeared to have been a consensus between the United Nations Administration and the Member States to ensure order and safety in the garage. One example was resolution 39/236, in which the General Assembly had endorsed a recommendation to suspend the parking privileges of any delegate whose parking fees were in arrears by more than three months, it being understood that such privileges would be restored once the arrears had been paid in full. That information had been incorporated in the booklet "Information for Delegations".

14. It had been the practice of the garage administration not to impose a fine on a delegation until after two reminders had been placed on the vehicle, and such fines were imposed primarily in respect of vehicles parked in prohibited areas and blocking critical access and exit points. Fines should not be construed as a punitive measure. They were meant to secure compliance with reasonable standards of traffic safety; they ensured the proper use of the garage and access to the building through the garage, avoided overcrowding of the parking areas and prevented accidents, as well as encouraging organized parking for the maximum convenience of all users.

15. **Ms. Peña** (Mexico) said that she noted the explanations given by the garage administration but considered that the issue should be taken up again at a future date since the delegation which had raised it was not present.

16. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) said that he endorsed the point made by the representative of Mexico and agreed that fines should not be imposed on diplomats within the United Nations grounds, although he acknowledged that reminders had been issued. He would also welcome an explanation of what was meant by "parking fees" since his delegation was unaware that such fees existed.

17. **The Chairman** said that the various questions put by delegations would be answered on another occasion.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.